

## Message Text

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ORIGIN OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 /030 R

DRAFTED BY OPIC/F BMHENDERSON  
APPROVED BY EB/IFD/ OIA:RDKAUZLARICH  
EB/IFD/OIA:DVGRANT  
AF/C: RIMARCUS (SUBST)

-----079117 220428Z /73

P 220020Z MAR 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

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FROM OPIC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN

SUBJECT: WESTERN CORN PROJECT

REF: (A) YAO 1299, (B) YAO 1359

1. AS DISCUSSED IN HENDERSON-HOLZMAN TELCON OF MARCH 17  
OPIC WOULD LIKE EMBOFF HOLZMAN AND/OR AID OFF MARION FORD  
TO VISIT FOUMBAN ASAP TO DISCUSS PROJECT STATUS WITH  
A AND B EMPLOYEES DR. ALISTER ALLAN AND GRAHAM OVENS  
("MANAGERS"). SNI HAS REQUESTED THAT A AND B LET ALLAN AND  
OVENS STAY IN FOUMBAN AT LEAST UNTIL END OF APRIL, IN ORDER  
TO PLANT AND TEND FIRST CROP AND SHARE KNOWHOW WITH  
CAMEROONIAN TECHNICIANS ASSIGNED TO PROJECT. A AND B SENT  
CABLE STRONGLY ENCOURAGING MANAGERS TO REMAIN, HOWEVER THEY  
HAD ALREADY MADE PLANS TO LEAVE CAMEROON BY MARCH 24.  
GIVEN OPIC'S SIMILAR INTEREST IN MANAGERS STAYING AS LONG  
AS POSSIBLE, A AND B REQUESTED OPIC SEND SEPARATE TELEX  
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URGING THEM TO STAY, WHICH OPIC SENT MARCH 16. PROJECT  
TELEX NO. IS UCCAO 5343 KN ATTENTION DR. ALISTER ALLAN  
(TELEX IS IN BAFOUSSAM BANK).

2. IN OPIC'S AND A AND B'S VIEW MANAGERS HAVE LEARNED A  
GREAT DEAL ABOUT GROWING CORN FOUMBAN AND HAVE DEVELOPED  
PLAN FOR FIRST CROP WHICH SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED FOR ALL

PARTIES' BENEFIT. AYUK TAKEM AND OTHER CAMEROON TECHNICIANS APPEAR EAGER TO WORK WITH MANAGERS. BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES IN WORKING WITH CERTAIN SNI EMPLOYEES, RECENT MISUNDERSTANDING REGARDING ACCESS TO PROJECT FUNDS, POOR COMMUNICATION WITH YAOUNDE AND LACK OF A AND B CORPORATE PRESENCE IN CAMEROON MANAGERS MAY FEEL ISOLATED AND WARY ABOUT STAYING WITHOUT LOCAL SUPPORT. HOLZMAN/FORD VISIT COULD PROVIDE CHANCE FOR SOUNDING BOARD, SYMPATHETIC EAR AS WELL AS PERSPECTIVE AND ADVICE ON DEALING WITH PROBLEMS MANAGERS FORESEE IF THEY STAY. IN ADDITION OPIC WILL APPRECIATE REPORT FROM EMBOFFS ON PROJECT STATUS, RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMEROONIANS AND MANAGERS, PERSONAL SITUATION OF MANAGERS, LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR STAYING, AND THEIR REACTION TO REDPATH ASSUMPTION OF PROJECT. SNI WOULD NO DOUBT ALSO APPRECIATE SIMILAR REPORT IN APPROPRIATE DETAIL.

3. OPIC'S OBJECTIVES AT THIS POINT ARE THREEFOLD: (A) TO EFFECT A SMOOTH AND HARMONIOUS WINDUP OF A AND B INVOLVEMENT IN MAIZE PROJECT, (B) TO RETAIN PILOT PROJECT IN FORCE BY INVOLVING ANOTHER QUALIFIED MANAGER/INVESTOR, (C) TO PARTICIPATE FINANCIALLY IN THE PILOT PROJECT. REGARDING (A) THE STRATEGY IS TO KEEP ALLAN AND OVENS IN CAM AS LONG AS POSSIBLE (EVEN PAST END OF APRIL) AND SHOW CAMEROONIANS THAT KNOWHOW IS NEEDED AND AVAILABLE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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ACCOMPLISH PILOT FARM OBJECTIVES. RE (B), AFTER CONVERSATION WITH TCHETGEN AND EMBOFFS, IT APPEARS THAT REDPATH INDUSTRIES OF CANADA IS MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE. SNI HAS ASKED THEM TO TAKE ON PROJECT. THEY ARE ALREADY IN CAMEROON DOING PILOT PROJECT MODELED AFTER FOUMBAN AND CAMEROONIANS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEM. OPIC AND IFC HAVE CONTACTED REDPATH CANADA TO EXPLAIN PROJECT. IF REDPATH DOES NOT ACCEPT OFFER, OPIC HAS TOLD TCHETGEN IT STANDS READY TO CONTACT OTHER U.S. COMPANIES. APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS REFTEL (A).

4. RE (C) OPIC IS EAGER TO REMAIN INVOLVED IN PROJECT, BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE TO CAMEROON AND LIKELY INVOLVEMENT DOWNSTREAM OF AMERICAN INVESTORS. STRATEGY IS TO URGE REDPATH TO TAKE EQUITY INVESTMENT, THEN TO ASK U.S. COMPANY WHICH PARTICIPATED IN AUGUST MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON WITH SNI AND A AND B TO INVEST IN PROJECT ONCE MANAGER SUCH AS REDPATH IS ON BOARD.

5. OPIC IS VERY FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD PROPOSAL OF EMBASSY TO ORGANIZE U.S. TOUR BY CAMEROONIAN OFFICIALS. WILL RESPOND IN MORE DETAIL TO REFTEL (B) SEPTTEL. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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